

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 AID-05 /084 W

-----089464 071738Z /43

O R 071700Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2669

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, ELAB, PN

SUBJECT: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS- ESCOBAR PRESS CONFERENCE

1. MAIN MEDIA SUBJECT JULY 6 WAS PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY
GOP NEGOTIATOR ROMULO ESCOBAR LATE JULY 5 AT FOREIGN MINISTRY
AFTER HE BRIEFED FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY ON CURRENT NEGOTIATING STATUS. COMMITTEE ALSO
ISSUED A BRIEF AND NONCOMMITTAL COMMUNIQUE AFTER THE BRIEFING.

2. JULY 6 "STAR AND HERALD" AND "ESTRELLA" FEATURED AP
ARTICLE WHICH SAID ESCOBAR HAD CONFIRMED THAT DURATION OF
NEW TREATY WOULD BE UNTIL 1999, STATED THAT THERE WERE
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN POSITIONS ON ECONOMIC ISSUES
AND THAT COMPENSATION AND CANAL ADMINISTRATION ARE THE TWO
OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED. AP REPORTS THAT ESCOBAR
"THEREFORE CONFIRMED" PRESS REPORTS THAT DURATION, NEUTRALITY,
MOST PART BEEN AGREED.

3. GOP-GUIDED "CRITICA" AND "MATUTINO", HOWEVER, CARRY
ARTICLES WITH A DIFFERENT EMPHASIS. THEY LAY MUCH GREATER

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STRESS ON OUTSTANDING PANAMANIAN PROPOSALS ON SOCIAL
SECURITY, RETIREMENT AND LABOR GUARANTEES, WHICH ARE
SAID TO HAVE BEEN ACCORDED HIGH PRIORITY BY GENERAL TORRIJOS.
"CRITICA" IMPLICITLY CONTRADICTS AP VERSION ON LANDS
WATERS BY QUOTING ESCOBAR THAT THAT ISSUE AND
COMPENSATION ARE CURRENTLY UNDER INTENSIVE STUDY BY EXPERT
GROUPS. LOCAL TELEVISION REPORT EVENING OF JULY 5 (FBIS/PANAMA

PA 060328Y) IS GENERALLY SIMILAR IN EMPHASIS TO "MATUTINO" AND "CRITICA" REPORTS. THERE WAS NO DIRECT COMMENTARY IN JULY 6 MORNING PRESS.

4. ON LABOR ISSUE, "REPUBLICA" ENGLISH SECTION FOR JULY 5 AND JULY 6 "STAR AND HERALD" BOTH CARRY REPORT OF A GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL 900 AFSCME WHICH PRODUCED "TEN COMMANDMENTS" TO GUIDE ITS LEADERS IN DISCUSSION OF TREATY LABOR ISSUES. THESE CALL FOR: MAINTAINANCE OF EXISTING LEAVE, PAY, RETIREMENT, LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE AND GENERAL EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS; DENIAL OF VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT FOR US CITIZENS UNTIL PANAMANIAN HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO ASSUME THEIR POSITIONS; GUARANTEE AGAINST LEGISLATIVE REDUCTION OF LABOR BENEFITS; AND EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATION OF EMPLOYEES BY AFSCME UNIONS NOW RECOGNIZED IN PANAMA FOR LIFE OF NEW TREATY. (COPY POUCHED ARA/PAN-CAMAUR.) THIS ARTICLE WAS NOT CARRIED BY SPANISH-LANGUAGE PAPERS. WEDNESDAY "STAR AND HERALD" ALSO REPRINTED AFSCME REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM SINCLAIR'S COLUMN OF LAST FRIDAY (PANAMA 4819).
JORDEN

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